THE SHEKEL

VOLUME XLIII NO. 3 MAY-JUNE 2010

Golem's Rise

Czech coin honors legend, Rabbi

Plus:

- *Shoah Heroes*
- *Historic Faisal prize award*
- *Lord Protector of the Jews*
- *Walking with Moses in Theresienstadt*

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ANDREW PERALA, EDITOR

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President's Message

I am happy to welcome you to the first issue of "The Shekel" edited by Andrew Perala. It looks different than past issues, but continues our tradition of presenting history portrayed through coins, medals, paper money, etc., as well as informative numismatic articles. As always, your comments, suggestions and story ideas are welcome and encouraged!

You may have noticed the unusual Israel banknote shown here picturing yours truly. No, Israel has not replaced Albert Einstein with Mel Wacks on its 5-New Shekel note; this transformation was magically done on a website (www.festisite.com/money) that enables anyone to place their portrait on currency from Israel and many other nations. Have fun, but don't try to spend it! (And if you place your image on a U.S. note, be sure the note you create is either 125 percent or larger or 75 percent of smaller than a genuine U.S. note! Otherwise, the U.S. Secret Service could pay you an unwelcome visit!)

I want to thank several AINA members who have recently made generous donations of numismatic material to our non-profit organization: Dr. Elan Halperin and Dr. Barbara Brynelson, children of Life Member Samuel Halperin Ph.D. ("in honor of Ed and Florence Schuman's incredible service to Israel numismatics"), Don Sussman, and Edward Chayet. We will use these coins and medals to grow AINA. Any other AINA members who have extra coins, medals, etc. are also invited to consider donating them to AINA to advance our wonderful hobby. You will get a good feeling as well as a tax deduction. Contact me at (818) 225-1348 to discuss the possibilities.

We are having our first contested election for the AINA Board of Directors in many years. This is a good sign for the future of AINA that so many fine candidates are vying for the four positions. Please read the bios of the candidates and send in your ballot.

Members and non-members are invited to join us at the annual joint meeting of AINA and the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation, to be held at the American Numismatic Association's World's Fair of Money® at the **John Hynes Memorial Convention Center in Boston, at 1:00 PM on Thursday, August 12th.**

Happy Collecting,

Mel

Letters

Honors and Awards project

Dear Sirs,

I would be most grateful if you could bring the following to the attention of your readers and members.

I am attempting to a worldwide research project on honors and awards given either to or by Jews.

This project covers all countries and all time periods and includes honors and awards of all descriptions, including but not limited to Orders, Decorations and Medals and related documents.

In my opinion, this is a topic that is presently under researched and under represented in Jewish museums worldwide. I want to rectify this deficiency to the extent possible.

I am qualified in the field of Honors and Awards as the author of a two volume, 1,657-page published reference book as well as more than 50 internationally published articles.

I would welcome information submissions and assistance from persons who can provide text information or details and descriptions of actual awards in their possession.

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Editor's Note:

As the new editor of a well-respected magazine, I take seriously the responsibilities of reporting on issues and topics of concern to the members of the American Israel Numismatic Association.

It is a singular honor to be asked to become the new editor.

But first, I want to thank Editor Emeritus Ed Schuman for the extraordinary challenge he has consistently met over the years. He has done an excellent job in covering the widest possible range of issues and topics of concern to AINA members.

Thanks also to Mel Wacks for granting the opportunity. Indeed, without his oversight and direction this magazine would not exist. He inspires contributors to fill the void with words and images that tell the stories that are compelling, stories that AINA members could find useful or insightful.

It remains the mission of "The Shekel" to find and present the full range of stories on issues and topics of interest and concern to AINA members. Some stories will force us to ask questions. That is good.

But to continue the tradition, I ask for story ideas as well as stories and photos from all. I am always open to ideas, suggestions, constructive criticism!

This is your magazine. I am just a shepherd. - Andrew Perala

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Research query

One of the foremost collectors of medals and coins related to the Holocaust has asked for the help of *The Shekel* readers. Severin Szperling, widely known for his collection of Holocaust medals and coins, seeks any information on a 60-millimeter silver medal, apparently struck in Israel at some indeterminate date and bearing the name of N. Steinmetz.

Both faces of the medal is shown at right. The obverse depicts a train and the legend **1940 AUSCWITZ 1945**. The reverse has the Star of David. Contact Szperling vie email, jam1442@aol.com.

New editor brings experience, deep interest to job

Born in Northern Michigan, raised in Alaska, Micronesia and Hawaii, and a 1979 graduate of Swarthmore College, Andrew Perala has been a professional journalist for most of his career.

He also has worked as a labor foreman (on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline project), as a logger in Southeast Alaska, an elementary school teacher in Hawaii, and was the communications manager for the W.M. Keck Observatory atop Mauna Kea in Hawaii, home to the world's largest optical telescopes.

From 2006 to 2009, Perala was the managing editor of "Worldwide Coins" published by *Coin World* in Sidney, Ohio.

From 1979 to 1992, Perala was employed at the *Anchorage Daily News* as a sports writer, feature writer, Community & Religion editor, Weekend editor and, in 1988 Perala was a reporter on the "People in Peril" project for the *Anchorage Daily News.*

This yearlong series of stories documented the tragic relationship between alcohol and suicide in rural Alaska, and won the 1989 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service among numerous other state and national awards.

Perala collects world coins, Alaska tokens and world medals. He resides in Kamuela, Hawaii with his wife Eileen and son Sean.

The Rescue of the 50,000

The story of the escape of Bulgaria's Jews from the Holocaust not well known.

By Bill Rapp

A great many Jews know the story of the Danes' rescue of 8,000 Jews from Nazi capture by smuggling them to Sweden in fishing boats. Very few Jews, though, likely know the story of how all 50,000 Bulgarian Jews were saved. Not a single Bulgarian Jew was deported to the death camps because of the actions of many Bulgarians from every walk of life, including the country's king and the Patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

Coin image courtesy ELFreeman on eBay.com

The reverse of a 1943 Bulgarian 50 leva coin.

In 1999, Abraham Foxman, the National Director of the Anti Defamation League, flew with a delegation to Sophia to meet the Bulgarian Prime Minister. He gave the Prime Minister the first Bulgarian language copy of a remarkable book, *Beyond Hitler's Grasp*, written in 1998, by Michael Bar Oar, a professor at Emory University, who also was a Bulgarian Jew who had migrated to Israel and then to the United States.

Please see Page 8, Heroes

Heroes: Bulgaria's people, government worked together to save 50,000 neighbors in WWII

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Bar Oar's book documents the rescue effort in detail. The ADL paid for and shipped 30,000 copies to Bulgaria, so that the population could partake in the joy of learning about this heroic facet of their history.

The story is clearly one of the last great secrets of the Holocaust era. The story was buried by the Bulgarian Communists, until their downfall in 1991. All records were sealed, since they didn't wish to glorify the King, the Orthodox Church, or the non-Communist parliamentarians, who at great personal risk, refused to give in to the Germans. As the Bulgarian Jewish Community, 45,000 of whom went to Israel after the War, were busy building new lives, somehow the story remained untold.

Bulgaria is a small country in central Europe. At the outset of the war, the population was 8 million. The government had aligned itself with Nazi Germany, a necessary step to recapturing Macedonia from Yugoslavia and Thrace from Greece. Both provinces had been stripped from Bulgaria after the first World War.

Coin image courtesy ELFreeman on Ebay.com

A 1943 50-leva Bulgaria coin obverse.

In late 1942 the Jews of Selonica were shipped north through Bulgaria, on the way to the death camps, in sealed box cars. The news of this inhumanity was a hot topic of conversation. Then, at the beginning of 1943, the pro-Nazi Bulgarian government was informed that all 50,000 Bulgarian Jews would be deported in March. The Jews had been made to wear yellow stars and were highly visible.

As the date for the deportation got closer, the agitation got greater. Forty-three ruling party members of Par-

PLEASE SEE PAGE 9, STAGGERED

Staggered, Nazis outfoxed by locals

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

liament walked out in protest. Newspapers denounced what was about to happen. In addition, the Patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Archbishop Krill, threatened to lie down on the railroad tracks. Finally, King Boris III forbade the deportation.

A 1942 Bulgaria 500 leva bank note, with the image of a young woman on the back of the note.

But this was 1943, and the German army had suffered a staggering defeat at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942-43.

With their military knocked backward in the Soviet's Pyrrhic victory, the Nazis had to wrestle with how much pressure they could afford to apply to an ally. They decided to pass.

Several points are noteworthy. The Bulgarian Jews were relatively unreligious and did not stand apart from the local populace by virtue of garb (aside from the enforced wearing of the yellow Stars of David), or adherence to rites.

Most of the population of Bulgarian Jews was relatively poor by comparison to Jews in other countries.

They also lived in integrated neighborhoods, common in a nation with many minorities, including Armenians, Turks, Greeks and Gypsies, in addition to Jews.

There was no concept of overt racism in that milieu. Bulgarians saw Bulgarian-Jews as Bulgarians, and not as Jews. And the small size of Bulgaria, similar to that of Denmark, there was a closeness of community that tends to disappear in larger, more populated countries.

Bulgaria during WWII was, in part, a bright spot that we can point to as an example of what could have, should have been.

The most famous of those saved was a young graduate of the Bulgarian Military Academy. When he arrived in Israel, he changed his name to Moshe Dayan. ₪

One man who made a difference

Nicholas Winton called the "Schindler of Britain"

In the waning years of the 1930s, the Nazi war machine - the Wehrmacht - accelerated its build up to blitzkrieg, aided by the official British policy of appeasement.

Few realized the futility of bargaining with sociopaths.

In late September 1938, a flood of refugees began streaming out of the Sudetenland. The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, had signed the Munich Agreement, granting Nazi Germany possession of Czechoslovakia's 11,000 square mile territory. Czech protests went unheeded by the British or French.

It is a certainty the Wehrmacht, which sought to apply the highest standards of engineering and science to the conduct of war, knew the military potential of the Sudetenland; virtually all the Czech military redoubts capable of checking German advances were located there. By stripping Czechoslovakia of its military prowess, the country lost its military defenses.

Refugee Jews pouring into Prague were thus faced with but a delay in the inevitable at that point in time: their continued persecution to its logical, inhumane conclusion, death.

In December 1938, Nicholas Winton left London for a winter vacation.

In September 2008, Sir Nicholas Winton was presented with the Czech Republic's Prime Minister medal for meritorious action in the final months before the outbreak of World War II. The medal is silver toned; the ribbon is blue, with black, red and white stripes leading inward from the outside edges.

The 29-year-old stockbroker originally had planned a ski trip to

PLEASE SEE PAGE 11, A 1938 VACATION

A 1938 vacation; a momentous decision

Image courtesy

A reflective Sir Winston at the Czech award ceremony.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Switzerland, but disturbing developments on the eve of World War II drew him to Czechoslovakia instead.

A friend working in the British Embassy had told him about Jews losing their homes and jobs to Nazi occupiers. When Winton arrived in Prague, he was asked to join a commissioned team working in Prague refugee camps under British auspices. That organization already was at work to aid elderly and other vulnerable adult refugees out of the country. Winton worked briefly with them, but recognized another need.

No organization existed to help the children escape.

Instead of taking holiday in the Alps or working with an established refugee assistance group, Winton made a decision that affected him for the rest of his life, and helped saved the lives of hundreds of refugee children, mostly Jews. On his own initiative, he set up an impromptu office on a table in the dining room of a Prague hotel

As word spread through Prague's refugee community of Winton, who soon became known widely as the "Englishman in Wenceslas Square," parents and caretakers streamed toward the hotel, frantic to get their children and charges sent to Britain.

Winton later recalled, "it seemed hopeless. Each group felt that they were the most urgent."

Winton worked in Prague for several months. Back in London, he persisted in pestering and ultimately demanding his government that it grant visas for the children. Winton also organized and ran a massive campaign, which included paying for and running newspaper advertisements in Britain to find foster parents for the Czech children. And perhaps most importantly, he raised money to pay the required bond. British law required the children to have not only a foster home and a bond of £50 sterling (to pay for the return home after the war) in place before the children would be allowed to enter the country, and Winton made sure those requirements were met.

In Prague, he arranged for nine

PLEASE SEE PAGE 12, ONE MAN'S

One man's campaign saved hundreds

Continued from Page 11

trains to carry hundreds of rescued children to London between March and August 1939. The last train, the ninth, never left the station. That day, Sept. 3, 1939, the Nazi blitzkrieg invaded Poland, and the train was halted in the Prague station by the Nazi occupying forces of Czechoslovakia.

The 250 children on the train never made it to London, and were never heard from again.

Presumed murdered, along with 15,000 other Czech Jewish children, the 250 who didn't make it to safety haunted Winton for decades.

"We had 250 families waiting at Liverpool Street that day in vain," Winton later said. "If the train had been a day earlier, it would have come through. Not a single one of those children was heard of again, which is an awful feeling."

But 669 children did arrive safely in London, all thanks to the efforts of Winton, a non-practicing Jew and pacifist who decided he could not stand by and do nothing.

On June 26, 2008 Czech Premier Mirek Topolánek presented the Czech Republic's highest civilian honor, the prime minister's medal, to Sir Nicholas Winton in a Prague ceremony also attended by Winton's daughter Barbara Winton with her husband and son.

Born May 20, 1909, to parents of German Jewish origin, Nicholas Winton had deep ties to the European continent. Winton's family had moved to moved England from Germany in 1907, settling in Hampstead and changing the family surname

On Thursday, June 26, 2008 Czech Premier Mirek Topolánek, at microphone, presented 99-year-old Sir Nicholas Winton with the Czech Republic's highest civilian honor.

Please see page 13, Survivors

Survivors remember man who saved them

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

from Wertheimer to Winton.

Educated in English schools, but retaining his family's links, at age 20 Winton began working for banks in Berlin, first at Behrens then at Wasserman.

In 1931 he left Berlin to work for the Banque Nationale de Crédit in Paris. He returned to London a few years later and began his career as a stockbroker. By all accounts, Winton had a carefree life in his early years.

Sir Nicholas Winton is congratulated by Czech Premier Premier Mirek Topolánek after receiving the Prime Minister's Medal in June 2008. The award is one of many Winton's earned.

But coming face-to-face with refugees in Prague shook Winton. Decades later, he recalled the experience of meeting desperate parents at his Prague "office" - the hotel dining-room table.

"People in the camps kept telling me that nobody was doing anything for the children," he said.

Present-day descendants of the original survivors say there are some 7,000 descendants of "Winton's Children."

Vera Gissing was one of the children Winton rescued. She is co-author of a Winton biography and the screenwriter for a film on him. In a recent profile, she praised Winton.

"He rescued the greater part of the Jewish children of my generation in Czechoslovakia. Very few of us met our parents again: they perished in concentration camps. Had we not been spirited away, we would have been murdered alongside them." ₪

FURTHER READING

Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation: Save One Life, Save the World, The Library of Holocaust Testimonies by Muriel Emmanuel and Vera Gissing, 192 pp. Mitchell Vallentine & Co., 2001.

Co-author Vera Gissing was a child in Czechoslovakia in 1939 and was one of the 669 children rescued by Winton.

PROFILE

YASHA BERESINER

BY DONNA SIMS, NLG

The owner of a London-based collectibles firm specializing in art, bank notes, Judaica, maps, playing cards, Masonic items as well as coins and medals, and a member of the American Israel Numismatic Association, Yasha Beresiner has parlayed his lifelong hobbies, and genius for languages, into a thriving business.

Born in 1940 Turkey to a Russian father and a Turkish mother, Yasha Beresiner and his family lived at the crossroads of East and West until 1948 when they moved to Israel for three years.

From Israel, the family moved to Italy for a few years and then to England. Holder of dual citizenship (British and Israeli), Beresiner received his primary education in Turkey and Italy and learned French while attending secondary school in England.

Beresiner's bookplate.

After moving back to Israel in 1961, Beresiner spent two years in the Parachute Regiment of the Israel Defense Forces, where he met his future wife Zmira, who just happened to be one of his sergeants. Married in 1963, the couple had two children, Guy and Dana, and are now the grandparents of six.

In 1967, Beresiner earned his law degree at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, and followed up with postgraduate law studies at University College in London.

Yasha Beresiner

With his legal training, and fluency in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Hebrew and Turkish, Beresiner followed a career with each step offering new opportunities: Legal Consultant of International Trade at Tenant Group; Director, Swiss Barter Trade Company of Switzerland; Director, UK Division of Paramount Coin International; Director, Stanley Gibbons Ltd. (non-philatelic division); Director, Inter-Col London, a collectibles firm, (and owner since 1987).

Beresiner also has been a consultant to the Franklin Mint Historic Currency Program; Excelsior Collectors' Program; InterPam 1982 Toronto Exposition; Kagin Numismatic Auctions; Sotheby's and Gibbons Antiquarian.

Aside from his career, Beresiner became an established name in the numismatic world from his authorship of numerous articles, books and journals in the U.S., the U.K. and around the world.

PLEASE SEE PAGE 15, COLLECTOR

Collector active in numerous organizations

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

His books and articles, plus numerous exhibits, have won many awards worldwide, including the American Numismatic Association's Heath Literary Award; the ANA Best Exhibit Award; the British Library Association Best Reference Book Award; in addition to the Best Exhibits at the InterPam; the Memphis International Show and the Numismatic Literary Guild.

Among the books and articles Beresiner has authored include "The Paper Tiger," "Catalogue of Colombian Currency," "The Story of Money," "Collectors' Guide to Paper Money," "British County Maps - a Guide," The Ortiz-Patifio Collection of Early Playing Cards," "Masonic Curiosities," and "City of London – a Masonic Guide."

His articles have appeared in many U.K., U.S., and Latin American journals, and various investment and business magazines.

Beresiner also is a member of many organizations: AINA, the ANA; American Numismatic Society, Canadian Numismatic Society; International Banknote Society (Life Member No. 2); is the founder of the International Map Collectors' Society, and also belongs to the International Playing Card Society, in addition to being an honorary member of the Colombia Numismatic Society, the Latin American Paper Money Society; and the Mexican Numismatic Organization inter alia.

Speaking engagements and lectures that Beresiner has delivered through the years are numerous, many given at meetings, conventions, dinners and other gatherings, both formal and informal.

Because of his sense of humor, Yasha has often been asked to make a return appearance. Some of his lectures, were given at ANA conventions and events in the U.S., Canada, Columbia, Peru, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy and Belgium.

Yasha Beresiner

In addition to his main hobby of collecting paper money, also known in numismatics as world bank notes, Beresiner has a wide variety of other interests, such as: because of his interest in local history, he was able to qualify as a City of London Guide.

He likes to invite collectors to join his "Numismatic City" walks when visiting London. He also plays Bridge at Tournament level; is a member of Fremasonry in England, Italy and Israel; was a Judo participant representing Israel at the Tokyo Students Olympics in 1967; and was appointed Queen Scout in 1958 where he participated in the World Jamboree. ₪

Napoleon's Palestine ambitions defeated at Acre

One of the great conquerors of the modern era failed in his massive effort to capture the ancient lands of Israel.

Napoleon Bonaparte, whose ambitions of conquest were exceeded perhaps only by the outrageous bounds of his ability to bend massive armies to his will, limped back to Egypt and eventually France in 1799 after a disastrous siege of Acre.

But it wasn't just the medieval fortress or the heritage of conquest and loss that also ultimately had defeated the Crusaders that sent Napoleon packing.

An unseen enemy also preyed on his military, and it wasn't the distant British, although they played a big part in Bonaparte's defeat.

Napoleon's attempt to take Acre was part of a much larger vision for the diminutive conqueror.

His plan to take Acre was supposed to ignite the Syrians—then the holders of the Levant– to rebel against the vastly more powerful Ottoman empire. The planned fallout of that rebellion would overturn British rule in India as well as its colonies in the Western Hemisphere.

Images courtesy William Rosenblum Coins

A British medal issued in 1820 celebrates the defeat of Napoleon at Acre in 1799 and honors the Royal Navy admiral Sir William Sidney Smith, top, for his role in defending Acre against the siege of Napoleon.

In his memoirs, Napoleon described his strategic reasoning for his tactical moves in Egypt and the Syrian controlled Acre:

"The principal object of the French expedition to the East was to check the power of the English. The Army which was to change the destiny of India was to march from the Nile. Egypt was to supply the place of Saint-Domingo and the Antilles, and to reconcile the freedom of the blacks from the interests of our manufacturers. The conquest of this province would have produced the ruin of all the English settlements in America and the Peninsula of the Ganges."

Napoleon's global chess match against the British could not be played out in the English Channel. The Royal Navy was the most potent waterborne military force in history at the time, and his own navy was no match whatsoever against it.

So, Napoleon planned a backdoor action that he hoped would topple the empire of his mortal enemy, the British empire.

PLEASE SEE PAGE 17, NAPOLEON'S

Napoleon's Middle East campaign flawed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

From the beginning, Napoleon's campaign to mortally wound the British empire with a Syrian knife faltered. The French force barely made the journey to Egypt ahead of admiral Horatio Nelson's fleet, landing in Alexandria on July 1, 1798. By July, 1798, Napoleon had captured Alexandria, and then moved on to take Cairo.

Cairo was a more difficult battle. Within sight of the pyramids, Napoleon's highly disciplined infantry squares repulsed a desperate cavalry charge lead by Mamluk horsemen. The French suffered a few dozen casualties; the Mamluks as many as 3,000.

But basking in victory was short-lived. On Aug.1, 1798, Nelson's Royal Navy fleet caught up with the French fleet in Egypt. Napoleon may have been something of a military genius on land, but he had no special leadership abilities on water.

The French, bottled up in Akubir Bay, had no chance against the British ships of the line. The British fleet punched a hole in the middle of the French fleet at anchor, and then proceeded to decimate the French ships from both behind and in front. Sandwiched by the superior tactics, training and firepower, 11 of the 13 ships in the French fleet were destroyed in one battle, with the British losing not a single ship.

Images: William Rosenblum Rare Coins

An Acre Citadel medal (25.9 mm) issued in 1840 for Turkish troops (non-officers) who took Acre from occupying Egyptian forces.

But the British made no move against the French in Egypt, which, after all, was ruled by the Ottoman Empire and the remainders of Egypt's previous rulers, the warrior-slave Mamluk empire. Under the Ottomans, the Mamluk's controlled a significant portion of Egypt when Napoleon arrived.

When the Ottomans declared war against the French in September 1798, Napoleon's options were severely limited. With the Royal Navy controlling the Mediterranean, the French could not expect reinforcements or fresh supplies. More importantly, Napoleon's plan to strike for India, and the ultimate downfall of the British empire, had to be scrapped.

But with the Ottoman declaration of war, Napoleon could not remain in Egypt. It was not his style, nor his doctrine to fight a defensive war.

To remain in Egypt would have been a slow death even if that were Napoleon's style. Massive riots, organized by Mamluk leaders (who themselves were beset by their own infighting) resulted in the deaths of some 3,000 Egyptians and 300 French troops in October 1798.

With the Ottomans reportedly massing two armies, one to strike southward from Turkey through Palestine and Syria, and the other to

PLEASE SEE PAGE 18, FRENCH

French fleet destroyed by Royal Navy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

gather on Rhodes and journey across the Mediterranean to attack from the sea, Napoleon faced a no-win pincer that would have doomed his entire campaign.

Napoleon took the offensive, and set out on Feb. 6, 1799, personally leading a force of more than 12,000 soldiers and cavalry to strike at Ottoman redoubts north, in Syria, and meet the southward advancing Ottoman army head on.

Napoleon's forces quickly captured El Arish and Jaffa. The quick capitulation of Jaffa precipitated one of the worst crimes of the war. After the Ottoman garrison at Jaffa surrendered, Napoleon had all 3,000 men executed on the beach.

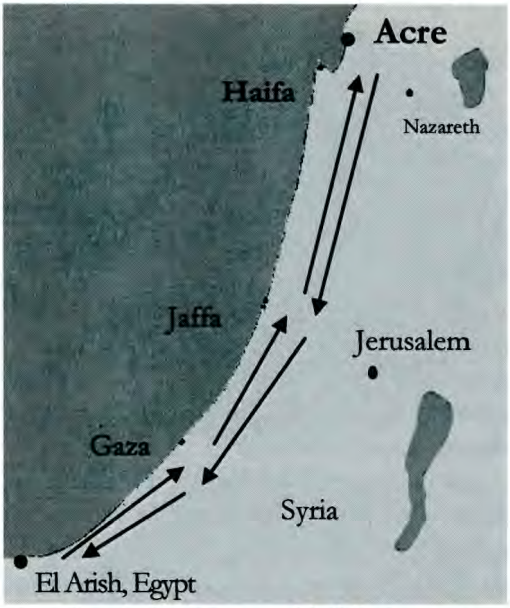
Ottoman resistance stiffened overnight. When Napoleon's forces reached Acre, a combination of events culminated in Napoleon's defeat.

Napoleon had sent his cannon by sea to Acre, but a small Royal Navy fleet commanded by Sir Sidney Smith captured the French cannon and installed them in the Ottoman fortress at Acre. Smith was aided by a French Royalist, Capt. Antoine DePhelippeaux, in bolstering the fort's defenses.

Smith then kept his ships, the HMS Tigre and HMS Theseus close enough to shore to add their cannon to the fort's and when Napoleon arrived three days later, the stage was set for a massive siege battle.

Backed by superior numbers of cannon, the British and Ottoman garrisons repulsed successive French assaults beginning on March 20, 1799.

The capture of Acre was key to Napoleon's plan to ultimately capture Jerusalem—this was his Plan B after the Royal Navy sank the French Navy in Akubir Bay.



Napoleon's land route on his failed quest to capture the ancient fortress of Acre in 1799.

The siege at Acre dragged on. For more than six weeks, the British and Ottoman garrison repelled a total of nine French assaults.

The Ottoman troops were aided by Haim Farhi, a Jewish adviser who directly supervised the fortress's defenses against the French siege.

Napoleon's forces were also under assault from the advancing Ottoman army. But superior French tactics in a battle at Mount Tabor defeated the advance arm of the Ottoman force.

The overland arrival of additional artillery to bolster the French army's depleted cannon in the siege of the Acre fort also briefly helped the French.

But a breach of the fort's outer wall in early May 1799 stopped the French assault.

The fort's defenders had built a second, interior fort wall that was not breached,.

Then Ottoman reinforcements for Acre arrived from Rhodes and Napoleon realized

PLEASE SEE PAGE 19, ROYAL

Royal Navy's Adm. Smith aided Acre

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

that his army could not succeed in taking either Acre or Jerusalem.

Still another calamity attacked Napoleon's forces—the bubonic plague.

Although the cause of the dread disease would not be identified for another century, fear of the plague was so contagious that Napoleon did not tell the masses of his army about the dozens who were ill early in the siege of Acre.

But as the siege dragged on, the casualities and deaths from the plague continued to mount, eventually filling a "plague" hospital on the flanks of Mount Carmel near Haifa.

Napoleon visited the plague hospital to reassure his troops in the field.

Eventually, the plague would kill more than 2,000 of Napoleon's force of 13,000 troops.

The Defeat of Napoleon at Acre was included in James Mudie's 40-medal set.

Faced with repeated failures to capture Acre, and with the Ottomans approaching in force, Napoleon gave up his siege.

His reasoning, written years later, blames the plague—in the city of Acre:

"The occasion seemed to favor the capture of Acre, but our spies, deserters and our prisoners all reported that the plague was ravaging the city and that every day more than 60 people were dying of it ...

"If the (French) soldiers had entered the city ... they would have brought back into camp the germs of that horrible evil, which is to be more feared than all the armies of the world."

Napoleon gave up and on May 20, 1799, began the long march back to Egypt. More French soldiers died of the plague on the march back to Egypt. Napoleon survived to return to France, where he soon seized power.

The French army in Egypt did not return for two more years.

To commemorate the valor of the Royal Navy's Sir Sidney Smith, a bronze medal was issued in 1820, as part of a larger set.

The medals, each 40 millimeters in diameter, were issued by medal promoter James Mudie.

The obverse of Smith's medal portrays him in profile, left. The medal's reverse shows a British lion protecting a camel (Syria) from a prowling tiger (Napoleon).

The inscription reads ACRE DEFENDED. BUONAPARTE REPULSED. SYRIA SAVED. . XXTH MAY MDCCLXXXXIX. ₪

Golem myth explored on Czech silver commemorative 2009 coin

Legends arising from tenure, teachings of chief Rabbi of Prague, Judah Loëw ben Bezalel, source of folk tale

The shadows of age-old legends and pogroms past haunt both sides of a 200-korun commemorative coin issued by the Czech Republic in 2009.

Available in two finishes, Proof with relief in matte, and Brilliant Uncirculated, the 13-gram, 31-millimeter, .900 fine silver coins depict an amorphous outline of a human-like figure on the reverse.

Enclosed within the reverse outline is the coin's legend RABI JEHUDA LÖW BEN BECALEL, honoring the 16th century chief rabbi of Prague, Judah Loëw ben Bezalel.

The dates 1609-2009 appear below the Czech spelling of Rabbi Loëw's title and name, and mark his birth and death years.

The vaguely human outline is not of Rabbi Loëw. The outline is meant to represent a golem, whose creation was attributed to Loëw in folk legends that arose in the centuries after his death.

The vaguely human outline on the reverse of a 2009 Czech Republic coin is not Prague's chief rabbi of the 16th century.

The golem is mentioned but once in the Bible (Psalms139:16). The passage reads "Your eyes saw my shapeless form," according www.hebrewoldtestament.com, further stating that "In modern Hebrew, the Psalm's verse is:

גלמי ראו עיניך
ועל־ספרך כלם
יכתבו ימים יצרו
ולא אחד בהם:

PLEASE SEE PAGE 21, GOLEM

Golem legend has roots in Scripture

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

In the folk legend associated with Rabbi Loëw, the rabbi fashioned a golem from clay, and shaped it to look like a human which then attained a simulacrum of human life when Rabbi Loew either spoke aloud or wrote on a slip of parchment and placed in the golem's mouth the ineffable name of G-d., all designed to protect Jews from attack in 16th-century Prague.

That's the legend. But the actual facts are more difficult to discern through the fog of time.

Also known as the Maharal, Rabbi Loëw "was one of the most seminal thinkers in the post-medieval period," according to his biographical entry on the Orthodox Union's website (www.ou.org).

"He developed an entirely new approach to the aggada of the Talmud and it is likely that no previous author devoted so much space to the interpretation of the non-halachic thought of the rabbis of the Talmud."

The aggada of the Talmud are the narrative, or non-legal, passages in the Talmud, according to the Yale University Jewish Learning Initiative. (www.jlionline.org/campusinfor/C35)

An 1899 line drawing depicts Prague's legendary 16th-century Rabbi Loëw communicating with the Golem. The drawing also reflects a host of views prevalent toward Judaism in the late 19th century.

Rabbi Loëw's influence in central Europe in the late 16th century is undisputed. "He was held in great esteem by his contemporaries and has had a profound impact on all streams

PLEASE SEE PAGE 22, RABBI

Rabbi Loëw also known as Maharal

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

of Judaism," the Union notes. Among Rabbi Loëw's students or disciples were two who furthered the scholastic tradition the rabbi founded, according to the Union.

"One of his leading disciples was R. Yom Tov Heller, author of the classic mishnaic commentary, Tosafot Yom Tov, who, in his introduction informs us that the Maharal greatly encouraged group study of the Mishna," the Orthodox Union notes.

The Maharal also is recognized today "as one of the staunch defenders of the tradition and of the undisputed wisdom of Chazal, or the authoritative opinion of the Talmud," according to the Union.

Yet, as fully committed to religious scholarship as a means to guide daily life as the Maharal was, he also was, according to the Union, "fully conversant with the scientific knowledge of his time as well as friendly with some of the contemporary eminent scientists. His disciple, David Ganz, worked in the observatory of Tycho Brahe, the distinguished astronomer."

So, how did such a great scholar

The reverse of the Czech Republic's 200 korun commemorative coin portrays multiple Stars of David with dates of infamous campaigns of anti-Semitism.

become linked to one of the best-known tales of the creation of a golem, a mythical creature the Orthodox Union calls a "fictitious creation"?

Indeed, with modern slang adding negative and pejorative connotations to the original concept of a golem (as in "fool" or "stupid"), the idea of a highly esteemed rabbi creating a near life-form seems strange to modern sensibilities.

Yet, numerous sources attest to the prevalence of belief throughout the Medieval period of numerous rabbis having created golems; Rabbi

PLEASE SEE PAGE 23, COIN'S

Coin's designer included man, myth

Continued from Page 22

Loëw's is just the version that has become the best known.

According to a variety of sources, the golem has several modern meanings (including even pejorative aspects in modern sland usage), but its original definition in Hebrew is "shapeless mass" according to the Jewish Virtual Library entry written by Alden Oreck.

As an artificial creature made from inanimate material, the golem is interpreted as imperfect or unformed in Talmudic scholarship. Oreck notes that according to Talmudic interpretation, Adam is called golem, a body without a soul, for the first 12 hours of his existence.

On the 2009 Czech Republic coin's reverse, Hebrew writing frames the "shoulders" and "head" of the human-like outline. The Hebrew texts from the Talmud are reversed as intended by the designer. The reversing of the texts expresses a look back through history generally, according to the designer's narrative, as well as the history of the Jewish community in the Czech lands in particular.

The coin's obverse has four Stars of David in various sizes, with multiple dates listed amidst the field. The name of the Czech Republic, CESKA REPUBLIKA, circumscribes the lower edge of the obverse. The letters of CESKA are differently sized.

The designer of the Czech Republic's coin deliberately reversed the Hebrew text on the coin's obverse. The reversing of the text reflects the artist's expression of history as looking back through time.

The denomination and abbreviated monetary unit 200 KC are positioned to the right of the largest Star of David. The Czech Mint mark is located in the field between lower right edge of the largest Star of David and REPUBLIKA.

Josef Safarik, the coin's designer, reversed the Hebrew text to symbolize the look "back through history generally and the history of the Jewish community in the Czech lands in particular." Safarik's initials are positioned to the right of the letter O of the rabbi's name. ₪

Auction Highlights

Bar Kochba large bronze:

$72,500

A large bronze coin of the Bar Kochba War, struck in 133/134 CE in Judaea, sold for $72,500 at a Goldberg Coins & Collectibles auction over the winter.

Measuring 32.5 millimeters in diameter and weighing 21.19 grams, the bronze coin overstruck on a Roman sestertius is considered one of the rarities of Bar Kochba series.

The coin's reverse depicts a two-handled fluted amphora surrounded by a paleo-Hebrew inscription YEAR TWO OF THE FREEDOM OF ISRAEL.

The obverse has an opened, or filleted olive wreath enclosing the paleo-Hebrew inscription SHIM'ON. Catalogued as Mildenberg 19 (with 11 examples cited) and Hendin 705, the example sold in late October 2009.

"An extraordinary coin in all aspects—strike, flan, metal, style, preservation. Without a doubt, the finest of its type. Very Rare. NGC graded Extremely Fine,' stated the catalog.

The pre-auction estimate sales price was $30,000 to $40,000.

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310-551-2646; 800-978-2646
Coin: Bar Kochba large bronze, 133-134 CE
Very Rare, Extremely Fine
Sold: $72,500 Oct. 31, 2009

Rare silver sela sells for $6,325

Most varieties of Bar Kochba selaim feature a star or cross above the Temple facade, but this rare issue has a wavy line above the facade instead.

According to the Heritage Auction catalog, "this feature may possibly represent the ends of roof tiles." The undated specimen shown here, struck in 134/135 CE, is 25 millimeters in diameter and weighs 14.51 grams.

The obverse has a tetra-style front of the Jerusalem Temple with the ark inside; the paleo-Hebrew inscription SHIMON around.

The reverse displays the ethrog (citron fruit) and lulav (palm frond, but can also include three sprigs of myrtle and two of willow, all bound together).

The paleo-Hebrew inscription FOR THE FREEDOM OF JERUSALEM around. Mildenberg 92 (O17/R71); TJC 269; Hendin 713. Near Extremely Fine, toned.

An exceptional specimen of this rare issue, according to the Heritage Auction catalog.

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Levy wins historic Faisal Prize in Medicine

By Natasha Mozgoyvaya,
Correspondent, Haaretz

Images courtesy Faisal Foundation

The Faisal International Prize in Medicine for 2009 was awarded to Dr. Ronald Levy of Stanford University.

An American professor has become the first Jew to win the *King Faisal International Prize in Medicine*, popularly known as the "Arab Nobel Prize." Stanford professor Ronald Levy, who heads of the university's Oncology department, told Haaretz that as an American Jew married to an Israeli it never crossed his mind that he might win the Saudi -financed competition.

After he was informed of his victory, Levy rushed to check the contest Web site, where he found his picture and biography already on the homepage. The prize committee had posted Levy's biography exactly as he submitted it, with one glaring exception: the line showing his postdoctoral work at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot had been deleted.

The prize, which included $200,000, a medal, and a certificate in English and Arabic, also came with a dinner with Saudi King Abdullah.

Levy told Haaretz he was certain his wife and daughters would not be able to attend the ceremony, as their passports are full of visas from Israel and his wife and one of his daughters were born in Israel. To his surprise, when he went to the Saudi consulate in Los Angeles, the attendants stamped their passports, and no one asked any questions.

In spite of their fears before the trip, Levy said his family was treated to royal hospitality during their entire stay in Saudi Arabia.

He said that even when people were aware of his religion and his family's background, he was treated no differently than anyone else.

Also, Levy said Saudis were fascinated with hearing what he and other visitors think of their country, and if their expectations were proved wrong or not.

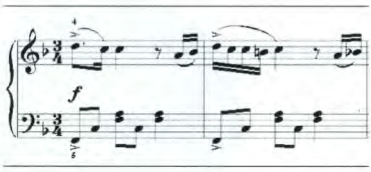
Levy's victory is the first time in the award's 30 years that a Jew has won, which Levy says he took as a sign that Saudi Arabia is becoming more open.

Levy won the prize for his part in the development of a drug used in the treatment of many types of cancer that is being widely viewed as revolutionary.

For more than 30 years, Levy has researched methods of using the body's immune system to fight cancer. His research led to the development of the concept that a drug made from an antibody could be used to fight cancer.

(Reprinted with permission)

CAPTURING GENIUS ON A MEDAL



Collecting numismatic items, whether coins, notes or exonumia like medals, benefits from patience.

An online search for medals honoring the Polish-born pianist Artur Rubinstein will turn up the well-known medals issued by the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corp. for the 1974, 1977 and 1980 international competition named after the legendary musician.

(The 13th annual Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition is scheduled for May 10-26, 2011 in Tel Aviv.)

The series of medals awarded to top competitors in the first three Rubinstein competitions feature portraiture drawn by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973).

Picasso's lead is a tough act to follow for any artist.

But Polish sculptor Stanislaw Sikora (1911-2000) did not shy away from creating a medal honoring his fellow countryman shortly after Rubinstein passed away in Geneva in 1982 at age 95.

Rubinstein's career as a pianist began in 1900. He is widely known

PLEASE SEE PAGE 31, RUBINSTEIN

Medals honoring Artur Rubinstein are well known, including the 1974 competition medal with Picasso's portrait of the pianist, bottom. But Polish sculptor's Stanislaw Sikora (1911-2000) medal, top, also is an outstanding work of medallic art.

Rubinstein's career spanned 85 years

At left, a photo of Artur Rubinstein in performance.

At right, top, the reverse of Stanislaw Sikora's medal honoring Rubinstein.

At right, lower, the reverse of the first Arthur Rubinstein international piano competition medal from 1974.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

for his interpretations of Chopin. (The opening notes of *Polonaise* are next to the headline at the beginning of this story.)

From his first public performance at about age 5, until he was age 90, few pianists were his rival, and none were more idolized, noted *The New York Times* in its obituary of Dec. 21, 1982.

"In the pantheon of 20th-century pianists, Mr. Rubinstein's place is assured as one of the titans. With his remarkable technique, golden tone and musical logic, with the élan he brought to his interpretations, with his natural, unforced and unflurried style, he was unique - as, indeed, every great artist is. What Mr. Rubinstein offered, above all others, was the ability to transmit the joy of music," noted *The Times*.

Artur Rubinstein was born Jan. 28, 1887 in the Polish city of Lodz. He was the youngest of eight children. His father was a businessman in the large Jewish community residing in Lodz.

In 1900, while only 13 years old, Rubinstein made his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic. Although Rubinstein made his U.S. debut at Carnegie Hall in 1906, his career didn't take off, and the next year in Berlin he considered suicide.

The failed attempt sparked a revelation, he later recalled. During World War I, he lived in London and never again performed in Germany.

Rubinstein stayed in the U.S. during World War II and became a U.S. citizen in 1946. Fluent in eight languages, Rubinstein could remember nearly all the works he played, a considerable repertoire.

A consummate public performer, Rubinstein was "the complete pianist," noted *The Times*. ๅ

Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England's Jews?

Images courtesy Classical Numismatic Group

A shilling struck in London in 1658 portrays Oliver Cromwell as a Roman emperor. The coin's reverse carries the Latin legend for PEACE IS SOUGHT THROUGH WAR.

By Marvin Tameanko

If historians prepared a list of all the gentile leaders in history who were helpful to the Jews, they could name Oliver Cromwell among the Top 20. Cromwell rose to power to become Lord Protector (a euphemism for dictator) of England, Scotland and Ireland.

No Jews lived in England at that time.

But Cromwell harbored no religious or social hatred of them, and his Puritan religion preached understanding and tolerance for the children of the ancient Hebrews.

The first English Jews, descendants of the Norman Jewish bankers and merchants who had been brought to England by William the Conqueror in 1066, were expelled from England in 1290 by King Edward I.

But Cromwell's political actions 365 years later in 1656 allowed the Jews to return and establish the English-speaking community of Jews that later emigrated to the rest of the world.

Images courtesy William Rosenblum Coins

A measure of the success of Cromwell's policy of tolerance can be seen in a 1796 Conder token issued by London's "Cabbage Society" - comprised of the city's Jewish tailors - for Purim.

Cromwell had been a general in the Puritan army that defeated the Royalists of Charles I in 1649. He established the

Please see Page 32, Puritans

Puritans inspired by heroes of old Testament

Rembrandt's illustration above is believed to be a portrait of Rabbi Manasseh, a chief Rabbi in Prague in the 16th century.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

republican form of government called the Commonwealth in England. When Charles I was executed, the English monarchy was effectively, if temporarily ended and Cromwell became the Lord Protector.

The Puritans, like many early Protestant sects, drew their religious inspiration from the heroes of the old Testament, e.g. Moses, Joshua and Gideon, so they appreciated Biblical history and showed some tolerance toward the Jews. Specifically, Cromwell considered it desirable that the Dutch Jews of Amsterdam be admitted to England. These were the Spanish and Portuguese "maranos" who settled in the Netherlands in the 15th century after being expelled from Spain and Portugal. In the Netherlands, many became prosperous as bankers and diamond merchants.

Cromwell recognized the power of their wealth and trade connections – they were among the first to establish a truly global network – and he sought to build an English commercial empire to rival that of the Netherlands by using the business acumen and connections of the Dutch Jews. At the time, the Dutch were the chief economic competitors of the English, and in many areas of the world, they far outpaced the English. As an astute leader of men, Cromwell viewed the Dutch Jews with the eye of an employer looking for good men to staff his businesses.

Invited to negotiate the conditions of a return to England, the Dutch Jews sent an emissary, Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel of Amsterdam, as their deputy to Cromwell. Rabbi Manasseh was a noteworthy and brilliant personality in history. He was a religious leader, and a man of worldly affairs, a famous preacher, statesman, cabalist and scholar.

PLEASE SEE PAGE 33, AMSTERDAM'S

Amsterdam's rabbi sent to negotiate with Cromwell

Continued From Page 32

Images courtesy William Rosenblum Coins

London's Cabbage Society of Jewish tailors issued another 1-penny equivalent token in 1814. But this issue, unlike the 1796 Conder token, does not mention the festive holiday of Purim.

The philosopher Baruch Spinoza was one of Rabbi Manasseh's pupils. Spinoza is considered one of the leading philosophers of the 17th century for his "highly original system" that "combined Cartesian metaphysical and epistemological principles with elements from ancient Stoicism and medieval Jewish rationalism," according to the *Stanford Encylopedia of Philosophy* (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza). "His extremely naturalistic views on God, the world, the human being and knowledge served to ground a moral philosophy centered on the control of the passions leading to virtue and happiness," and Rabbi Manasseh was influential in Spinoza's philosophical development.

Rabbi Manasseh also corresponded frequently with the learned Queen Christina of Sweden. As a man of business, he founded the first Jewish printing press in the West. The artist Rembrandt made an etching, believed to be a portrait of Manasseh, which shows the Rabbi dressed a typical Dutch burgher of the era, looking something like a "cavalier" or one of the Three Musketeers from Alexander Dumas' novel, and not at all like a religious leader.

Another contemporary artist, Salomo d'Italia, drew Rabbi Manasseh in 1642 for a volume of his writings (more than a decade before he was sent to negotiate with Cromwell) and the portrait compares well to the disputed etching of Rembrandt.

When Rabbi Manasseh arrived in England in 1655 he shrewdly saw that not all the English authorities would approve of the Jews coming to England merely for their commercial skills, so he appealed to Cromwell and his associates to allow the Jews to return based on the Christian principle that they would hasten the "Last Judgment" promised in the Bible. Manasseh reasoned that the Protestants believed that only when the Jews

Please See Page 34, Manasseh

Manasseh's brilliance extended beyond matters of faith

Images Courtesy Rosenblum Rare Coins

A 1956 bronze medal by Paul Vincze commemorates the 300th anniversary of the Resettlement of the Jews in Great Britain. Portraits of Oliver Cromwell, Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel, left; female figure, scroll, right. (38mm, bronze).

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

were scattered to the four corners of the world would redemption be possible.

How could this prophecy be fulfilled, Manasseh asked, if there were no Jews in England, one of the most prominent "corners of the world"?

In this argument, Manasseh took a religious doctrine that frequently led to persecution of the Jews and turned it around so Jews would become desirable and accepted in English society.

This was a brilliant stroke of political and religious reasoning combined.

Cromwell convened the Whitehall Conference that year and summoned politicians, statesmen and theologians to the meeting. Despite some opposition from religious leaders, the participants concluded that there was no legal reason to forbid the Jews' return to England.

Manasseh went to London and strongly influenced Cromwell with religious arguments that were strokes of rhetorical and political genius.

The Puritan leaders saw the logic of this argument but were not sure the common English people would accept them, so they invited the Jews to settle in England but without a formal government invitation.

Rabbi Manasseh assisted this process of immigration in 1656 by writing one of his finest works, *Vindicia Judaeorum*, a book that deflected religious attacks on

PLEASE SEE PAGE 35, MANASSEH'S

Rabbi's writings influenced Cromwell's Conference

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34

the Jews and made the case that they would be a benefit to English society.

English authorities hoped the arrival of Jewish bankers in England would break the stranglehold on the economy held by the Christian bankers who then were charging usurious rates interest that prevented development of commerce.

In fact, the Jews arriving from Amsterdam did stimulate the banking system through competition with the established banking houses and eventually forced interest rates to drop, and thus allowing the English economy to grow.

Soon, the newly arrived Jews rose to important mercantile positions. Thirty years after Cromwell, England's King William III (1678 to 1702) knighted Solomon Medina, a Jewish banker originally from the Netherlands, who had played an instrumental part in keeping interest rates to a reasonable level and thus significantly aiding the development of England into a world commercial power.

Eventually, Cromwell's actions allowing the Jews to return to England set a political and social precedent that enabled Jews to emigrate to the English colonies in the West Indies and America, and later to Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

A contemporary portrait of Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel of Amsterdam from a volume of his writings.

Part of the reason that America was so willing to welcome the Jewish Diaspora can be linked to the founding of the colonies were largely founded by the Puritans, Cromwell's intellectual and spiritual companions.

And so, in accordance with the Biblical prophecy, the Jews spread out into all corners of the world and, naturally, all of them spoke English. ๅ

Funds siphoned from petrol sales in last days of British Mandate supported Resistance

By Stuart Weinerman

In her 1978 work *Judaic Tokens and Medals* (published by AINA), Sylvia Haffner included a series of chits or tokens from the Center of Transportation Cooperative. They are small beige paper receipts for 1, 2, 3 or 4 mils issued in the years between the end of World War II and the first years of the modern state of Israel.

The stated purpose was to cover the additional cost of benzene (gasoline). Haffner writes that they were actually a tax or subsidy for the Haganah in a ruse intended to deceive the British Mandate authorities.

The Haganah, of course, was the paramilitary force created in the 1920s to protect Jewish farms and kibbutzim when British occupation forces proved unable to do so. The force evolved into a resistance force against the British over the decades leading to the fight for independence, an evolution marked by the reaction of the Haganah and numerous others to a series of specific oppressive events presided over by the British.

While the Haganah did fight along with the British in the 1936 to 1939 Arab revolt in Palestine, events preceding the outbreak of World War II in 1937 and 1939 fractured hopes for an independent

Please See Page 37, Funds

Images courtesy Stuart Weinerman

Chits of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 mils were sold from 1945 to 1948; ostensibly to pay for gasoline's higher costs. Some funds were diverted to resistance forces fighting British occupation.

Funds funneled to Resistance from gas chit sales

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

nation for Jews in Palestine at that time.

The Haganah did fight alongside the Allies in WWII — the need was obvious and immediate — but following the war, the urge to seek true independence gained unstoppable momentum. And while factions supporting more extreme measures against the British split from the Haganah in the period 1945 to 1948, the military experience gained by all the resistance forces proved invaluable to the defense of the newly born, and genuinely fragile state of Israel.

The day after the declaration of independence on May 14, 1948, Israel was attacked by neighboring Arab states.

TAXI PALATIN טקסי פלטין
DAY AND NIGHT SERVICE 4900 שרות יומם ולילה
IN TOWN & OUT OF TOWN Phone בעיר ומחוץ לעיר
TEL-AVIV, ACHAD HA'AM ST. 19 תל־אביב, רחוב אחד־העם
Cor. Nachlat Benjamin פנת רחוב נחלת בנימין
542
Please enter to the account of
the sum of
During Hours
Sign of Passanger
L. P. Mils Details
Total

Image courtesy Stuart Weinerman

A Tel Aviv taxi company receipt and an attached gasoline surcharge chit are dated Sept. 5, 1947.

There is much more to the story, of course, but this brief view of some of the events and social, political and military forces leading to the creation of modern-day Israel offers a good reason to better understand the scope of the gasoline tokens and chits used to help fund the Haganah and resistance to the British occupation.

These are not truly tokens, as they did not circulate, but were issued as receipts for value received. The logistics of their use was not noted by Haffner in the initial listing. In researching this story, I purchased a 5 mil note, a denomination not previously listed. That chit is shown in the illustration on Page 36.

The probable way that these chits were used can be seen from the second type of chit, seen above attached to a receipt from a Jerusalem taxi

PLEASE SEE PAGE 38, GAS

Gas chits an ingenious, hidden funding tool

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

company. This type also appears to be previously not listed or cataloged. The receipt is very similar in appearance to those mentioned above, but the issuing agency is now the Organization for Taxi Drivers in Israel.

The denomination is for 10 mil, "to cover the increase in the cost of gasoline for all trips up to 500 mil" (all translations are the author's).

I've included two examples each of taxi receipts and gasoline chits.

Each gasoline chit is attached to a receipt from a taxi company. The first group is from the Shomer taxi company, Jerusalem. The second group is from Taxi Palatin, Tel Aviv.

The latter receipt is dated September, 5 1947; the date on the first is not legible. There is again no overt mention of the Haganah. It remains unclear from just these pieces of evidence if these pieces were truly subsidies for the Haganah or other organizations, or simply a fuel-surcharge for pure commercial purposes. If funds were funneled to resistance forces, it is highly likely the transfer took place off the records.

If the gas chits were used simply for purely commercial purposes, the taxi drivers in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv anticipated a more modern development: the recent trait of airlines of imposing fuel-surcharges, rather than raising the nominal cost of tickets, when selling airline seats!

Images courtesy Stuart Weinerman

A receipt from the Shomer Taxi Company of Jerusalem with a gasoline chit or receipt attached.

Image courtesy Stuart Wienerman

A coupon for four gallons of gasoline is dated April 9, 1950.

A third set of gasoline-related chits (illustrated on Page 39) are also unlisted. These are three chits, each measuring approximately 3.0 by 1.5 inches. The translation is "Jewish Agency for Israel/ National Council for the Israeli People/ Fuel Fund/ 24,

PLEASE SEE PAGE 39, FUEL

Fuel surcharge, emergency tax or funds to fight?

Continued From Page 38

8 or 96 mil/ Council for the (emergency) Situation, Haifa."

Shown here in black and white, the actual colors for the chits are beige for the 24 mil, blue for the 48 mil , and pink for the 96 mil.

It is possible, and perhaps even highly likely, that these are true emergency taxes, not simple fuel-surcharges placed on gasoline, although the unusual denominations, i.e. multiples of 24, are not known.

The last note described is a coupon for 4 gallons of gasoline from the Keren Kayemet of Israel, (the Jewish National Fund), Jerusalem office.

The note is light beige, with a blue seal of the Keren Kayemet, and measures 4.5 by 2.66 inches.

The note is dated April 9, 1950, certainly still a time of supply shortages in the early period following the War of Independence, which might explain the relatively small amount, four gallons, of gasoline it supplied.

It was issued to Nahum Mizrach. The author has not seen this type of coupon listed or published.

All these numismatic items bear witness to the difficulties faced by the Jewish population in Palestine and Israel, before and after the War of Independence. There were significant shortages of financial resources and supplies. Organizations representing the people had to be imaginative in responding to the problems.

Images courtesy Stuart Weinerman

Gasoline tax chits for 24, 48 and 96 mils are strong candidates for true emergency taxes.

The author would greatly appreciate any further information concerning these items. If any reader has more information, or has other related items, please forward the information to The Shekel or email the author, smhswein@aol.com. ₪

WALKING WITH MOSES

THERESIENSTADT BANK NOTE'S DESIGNER SOARS FREE

Images courtesy Collection Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Bank notes designed by Petr Kien for a forced propaganda campaign carry another message for Theresienstadt's temporary residents with its dominant art image of Moses holding the tablets of the 10 Commandments.

BY ANDREW PERALA

In late 1943, as a bitter winter hunkered down over central Europe, more than 150 musicians gathered in a large basement in the Czech town of Terezin to rehearse Giuseppe Verdi's "Requiem."

With a broken-legged piano and just one musical score, the rehearsal of an opera by so many musicians was made even more remarkable by its location in the Jewish ghetto of Thieresienstadt.

Unlike other Jewish ghettos in World War II that were consigned to the most dilapidated sections of cities, all of Terezin had been designated as a self-ruled "ghetto."

PLEASE SEE PAGE 41, DESIGNER

Designer of notes had promising career cut short

A 1943 sketch by Petr Kien of composer Carlo Taube, who also was interned at Theresienstadt.

Photo courtesy Elena Makarova Group Initiative; http://makarovainiti.com.

A 1940 photograph of the Prague artist Petr Kien, who designed the Theresienstad "bank notes," four years before he died at age 25 in Auschwitz.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

The scenic and historic fortress town of Terezin was destined to become a far different community than any of the other World War II Jewish ghettoes.

Built with great care and attention to detail between 1780 and 1790 by Emperor Franz Josef II, Terezin was named after his mother, Maria Theresa (who is also the namesake of the eponymous, and ubiquitous, 1780 silver thaler).

The Nazis ejected Terezin's residents and transformed the town into a prisoner transit point for concentration camps elsewhere, while touting the internment camp as a "model retirement community."

As an "ideal" town for sequestering Jews and others considered undesirable by the Nazis, all of Terezin became part of an elaborate scheme to deceive international monitors, including the International Red Cross.

Interned at Theresienstadt, along with the elderly, were thousands of artists and musicians, poets and play-

PLEASE SEE PAGE 42, BANK

Bank note designer one of many artists of Theresienstadt

Images courtesy Haim Gittler

Bank notes believed to have been designed by the Czech artist Petr Kien all feature Moses holding the 10 Commandments. But subtle differences characterize each denomination of bank note.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

wrights, along with thousands of other accomplished and educated professionals from Jewish communities in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Yet, the superficial appearance of the transformed "model" community was always and only just that—skin deep.

The temporary residents of Theresienstadt, which ultimately held some 162,000 Jews, were held almost totally in thrall by the propaganda efforts of their enslavers.

Many were forced to enact propaganda ploys staged by their overseers, including the staged depositing of "bank notes" in a bank created primarily to deceive international monitors. Others worked in a special shop recreating paintings of Rembrandt and Rubens for Nazi ownership.

But the creative blossoming that evolved despite the overarching control of the German SS was one of the great ironies of Nazi attempts to create the illusion of Theresienstadt as a serene community.

True, little Resistance action took place at Theresientstadt. Instead there was a flowering of opera rehearsals and performances, of plays, poetry readings, cultural lecture nights, the estab-

PLEASE SEE PAGE 43, IMAGES

Image of Moses, 10 Commandments significant

Continued From Page 42

lishment of a library with more than 10,000 volumes, plus an active jazz band and an extraordinary range of visual talents capturing moments of camp life with pencil, pen and brush.

The Czech artist and writer Petr Kien was one of the artists of Theresienstadt.

Kien also was one of the estimated 1.4 million people to die at the hands of Nazi death squads in the Auschwitz concentration camp network. Among the million and more who died was Franz Kafka's sister, Otla Kafka Davidova, a volunteer nurse at Theresienstadt who also was shipped to Auschwitz with the children she had attempted to nurse back to health.

Images courtesy Collection Israel Museum, Jerusalem

The 1-krone notes were the smallest denomination in Kien's series.

Before voluntarily accompanying his wife and parents to Auschwitz in 1944, Kien had been deported from Prague and interned in Theresienstadt in December 1941.

The 23-year-old was appointed a deputy head of the art room in the Jewish self-government's Technical Office.

Like all internees, Kien struggled daily just to survive. Food was short, oversight brutal, death from illness and starvation common (especially among the elderly), alliances temporary, and terror a constant.

The only other fact of daily life that superseded all other travails was the requirement for everyone to spend most of their waking hours locked indoors or standing in line, even if they worked full-time jobs, to get food and other necessities. The pressure could become unbearable. Many lost hope.

To relieve the stress, Kien secretly took supplies from his office (an act punishable by execution), and drew still life portraits and scenes of daily ghetto life.

Kien also wrote poetry, plays and the libretto for Viktor Ullman (a student of Arnold Schonberg) and their one-act opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis; oder der Tod dankt ab (The Emperor of Atlantis; Or Death Resigns).* According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Ullman-Kien opera "is thought by many to be one of the most significant creations in the spiritual legacy of the Holocaust era."

Kien's other crowning achievement just might have been the designs he created for Theresienstadt's bank notes, according to the Museum of the National Bank of Belgium.

Please See Page 44, Subtle

Subtle message of faith carried on Kien's notes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

A bank had been created in Theresienstadt at the end of 1942, with its director required to adhere to all the normal accounting procedures even though the bank was not an actual functioning instrument of commerce.

The expected arrival of an inspection visit by Danish members of the International Red Cross in the spring of 1943 spurred a command to give Theresientstadt all the appearances of an actual thriving community. (The visit actually took place a year later.)

Image courtesy Simon Wiesenthal Center Library and Archives, Los Angeles, California

A painting of Theresienstadt by bank-note designer Petr Kien has its bucolic sensibility betrayed by a guard tower and ramshackle barracks, ever-present reminders of oppression and human cruelty.

Along the streets of Terezin, shops were opened and stocked with goods and personal possessions confiscated from newly arrived Jewish prisoners.

A concert hall and coffeehouse, albeit one that served only a weak coffee substitute, also were opened.

Even so, Theresienstadt lacked the tool of commerce that existed in Warsaw's ghetto as well as others: money.

The Technical Office received an order to immediately design distinctive bank notes. Kien is credited with designing the 1 krone, and 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 kronen notes that were then printed by Prague National Bank.

The notes depict Moses with the Ten Commandments, a Star of David, and the motto QUITTUNG UEBER KRONEN (RECEIPT FOR KRONEN) on the face, and QUITTUNG, a Star of David, the date of issue (Jan. 1, 1943), and serial number on the back.

The detail of the notes is exceptional in comparison to similar scrip issued in other quarters and under similar circumstances.

Among the countless tragedies to befall Jews during World War II, the loss of artistic genius can be counted among the greatest.

This view in no way is meant to lessen the depth or breadth of loss of life.

But works of art define a culture, and for many, culture defines a people.

Kien's choice of Moses for the notes' main art has to be considered significant.

Why did Kien select a revered figure from ancient times? Was it because Moses had received the 10 Commandments with no human intervention on Mount Sinai? Or was it because Moses walked with his people across desert and sea to the Promised Land?

Whatever the reason, the message appears to be clear. Even in a community constantly ruled by fear, deprivation and ultimately death, another journey awaits those who do not lose faith, or hope. ๅ

A ¼-ounce silver Proof 5 dinars is one of nine "coins" privately struck for sale to collectors. The fantasy coins carry the Arabic word for pattern, جنومذ, on each according to the designer.

Ephemeral gesture:

2010 Palestine fantasy coins emerge

By Andrew Perala

Fantasy coins dated 2010 depicting distinctive Middle East animals and the name PALESTINE have been struck and are now being sold by several world coin dealers.

Each of the nine coins bears the coat of arms symbol of the Palestine National Authority (a stylized eagle of Saladin) on the obverse, with an elegantly engraved image of a creature indigenous to the region on the reverse.

Samples of the privately minted coins have been sent to the Palestine Monetary Authority "to be proposed for a national currency," said the coins' designer, Joe Lang.

But there is no suggestion in any news report from Israel that the Palestinian Authority is actively considering a national currency, which under current Israeli law is not possible.

Images courtesy Joe Lang/Stephen Album Rare Coins

The stylized eagle of Saladin is the national symbol on unofficial pattern or fantasy coins suggested by the coin set's designer as a future national coinage for a Palestine nation.

Lang is a partner at Stephen Album Rare Coins in Santa Rosa, CA, and an

Please see Page 46, Palestine

Palestine "coins" elegantly designed, but lack authority

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

experienced designer of coin dies.

"Mr. Lang has also made other so-called Fantasy coin sets from Kurdistan, Darfur, Keeling Cocos Islands, Easter Island and the Galapagos Islands, to name a few," said Oded Paz, founder of the Unrecognized States Numismatic Society. (http://www.ushs.info/).

The 2010 Palestine fantasy coinage was struck in denominations based on the Jordanian dinar, one of several commonly used currencies in the territories administered by the Palestine National Authority.

Images courtesy Joelscoins.com

A 2010 Palestine 50 qurush fantasy coin carries the elegant rendering of a leopard.

The New Israeli Shekel (NIS) is the only official currency of the territories. But other commonly used currencies include the Egyptian pound, the euro as well as the United States dollar.

The denominations in the 2010 set of eight range from 1 qirsh to 2 dinars, and include two ringed bimetallic issues, the 1 dinar and the 2 dinars.

A separate 5 dinars silver Proof, also designed by Lang, was struck in a mintage of 750 Proof and 100 Satin Finish at the Patrick Mint, also of Santa Rosa, CA.

The 5 dinars specimen is struck on a ¼-ounce .999 fine silver planchet 27 millimeters in diameter. The rest are struck on base metals.

All are correctly classified as "fantasy" coins, which differ from circulating and non-circulating legal tender coins because they were never authorized by a legitimate national authority and are not legal tender.

Two world coin dealers, Joel Anderson (www.joelscoins.com) and Pinchas Bar-Zeev (http://isracoins.com) sell the sets.

Logo of the Palestine Monetary Authority

Bar-Zeev notes in his firm's newsletter that "the de facto circulating currency in both the Palestinian-administered areas in the West Bank, as well as in the entire Gaza Strip is the New Israeli Sheqel (NIS)." The Jordanian dinar is the other unofficially circulating currency, along with the "dollar, euro and various Arabian Gulf currencies," Bar-Zeev notes.

That's the view from the ground; Bar-Zeev's firm is based in Israel.

In a strategic plan outlined in 1997, "Law No. 2 of 1997 on the Palestinian Monetary Authority," the statement is made that the Palestine Monetary Authority will "issue the national currency and coins in due course, in accordance with the terms and conditions to by (stet) the law on issuing currency and securing the required cash reserve."

The Palestine Monetary Authority's official website (http://www.pma.ps), as of April 20, 2010, did not state anything about any plans to begin issuing a national currency, which also would include bank notes. Attempts to reach the Palestine Monetary Authority for comment were unsuccessful. ₪

PLEASE SEE PAGE 47 FOR SPECIFIC DESTAILS ON THE "COINS"

Proposed 2010 "coins" destined for Palestine?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 46

2010 Palestine fantasy coins:

1 qirsh:

Alloy: copper-plated steel
Diameter: 25 millimeters
Weight: 5.5 grams; Edge: round, smooth
Reverse: Fat tail scorpion
Obverse: Palestine Authority symbol (on all)

2½ qurush
Alloy: copper-plated steel ; Diameter: 22 mm;
Weight: 3 gr; Edge: round, reeded;
Reverse: Marsh sandpiper (not pictured)

5 qurush

Alloy: Nickel-plated steel; diameter: 26mm;
weight: 5 gr; edge: round, reeded;
Reverse: White pelican

10 qurush

Alloy: nickel-plated steel; Diameter: 28 mm;
Weight: 8 gr; Edge: round, reeded;
Reverse: Barbary falcon

25 qurush

Alloy: brass; Diameter: 26.5 mm;
Weight: 7.4 gr;
Edge: seven-sided/smooth
Reverse: White stork

50 qurush

Alloy: brass; Diameter: 29 mm; Weight: 9.6 gr; Edge: seven-sided, smooth;
Reverse: Leopard

1 dinar
Alloy: ringed bi-metallic; brass core, nickel ring; Diameter: 25 mm;
Weight: 6.45 gr; Edge: round, smooth/reeded;
Reverse: Argali mountain sheep (not pictured)

2 dinars

Alloy: ringed bi-metallic; brass core, nickel ring; diameter: 27 mm; Weight: 8.4 gr;
Edge: round, smooth/reeded
Reverse: Two sand cats

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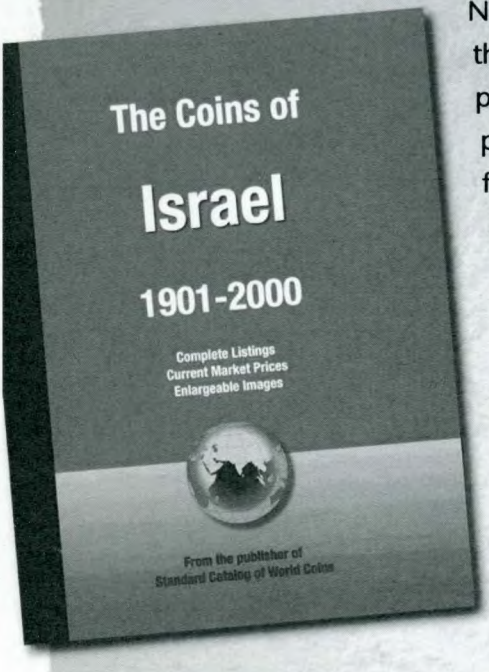

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AKKO

Recorded in Babylonian and Egyptian sources, the city of Akko on the Mediterranean Coast in northern Israel, has a 4,000-year-old history, one of the longest in the world. Many historical conquerors have passed through the city, each one leaving its imprint: the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, Mamluks, Ottomans, British, until the City became incorporated in the State of Israel.

Today, Akko is a museum of archeology, anthropology, sociology and architecture.

In 2001, Akko was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, for its well-preserved subterranean Crusader city dating from 1104 - 1291, as well as components of 18th and 19th century Ottoman towns.

Pictured on the coin are the ancient walls of the city, the famous Khan-el-Umdan caravanserai and its clock tower, the Crusader Knights' Hall, famous white mosque and other buildings on the Akko skyline. The UNESCO World Heritage Emblem appears to the left, below the face value.

Design: Moshe Pereg

Coin Specifications:

Cat. No.	Metal and Finish	Face Value	Mint Mark	Diameter	Weight	Max Mintage
31887300	Gold/917 22k, Proof	NIS 10	"מ"(Mem)	30mm	16.96g	555
21887380	Silver/925 Proof	NIS 2	"מ"(Mem)	38.7mm	28.8g	2,800
21887300	Silver/925Proof-like	NIS 1	Star of David	30mm	14.4g	1,800
71887331	Set of the above 3 coins					
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